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THE SMALL FARMER HAS A BIG JOB TO DO

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The importance of the small farmer group in the battle of production is evident from an analysis of the farming population. Recent estimates indicate that 3,800,000 or 64-percent of the Nation's 6,000,000 farmers, are not now producing the 16 war units recommended as the basis for determining an essential farm producer under Selective Service. This means that only 2,200,000 farmers are producing at or near full capacity and many of these must be able to obtain sufficient labor if they are to maintain their present output.

Of the 3,800,000 who are not operating at full capacity, about 1,300,000 are part-time or retired farmers and can be counted on for little or no food and fibre increases. This leaves 2,500,000 farmers who are not producing to the full extent of their labor resources. A large proportion of these can be brought up to full capacity production with credit and other necessary assistance. Others in this group constitute a reservoir of labor which can be drawn upon either for agricultural or industrial manpower requirements.

Between 350,000,000 and 400,000,000 men-days of labor are going unused annually on our farms. This is enough manpower to produce every day the equivalent of 200 million pounds of pork or 25 million gallons of milk or 2 million dozen eggs. The greater utilization of this manpower is essential to attain 1943 food production goals.

There are three ways in which underemployed farmers can be brought into full agricultural production:

1. The small farmer who can make his greatest contribution on his present farm should be provided with the credit, supervision and other assistance he requires to make the best use of his land and labor.
2. The small farmer who is stranded on poor land while good land is available in his own farming area can be helped to take over a farm on which he can become fully productive, and then given such assistance as he needs in carrying out his new undertaking.
3. Small farmers who can serve best by moving to other areas as operators or farm workers should be informed of such opportunities, given training in the work they are to do and provided transportation to the places where they are needed.

Small-scale farmers can turn to the Department of Agriculture for many types of assistance they need to increase food and fibre production. Rehabilitation loans are made by the Farm Security Administration to farmers who cannot

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get credit anywhere else for livestock, machinery, equipment and other farm and home needs. Loans also are made to enable individuals or groups of farmers to obtain cooperatively such services and equipment as purebred sires, machinery, farm and home supplies and marketing facilities which they cannot afford to own individually.

The Department of Agriculture has a well-trained staff of field workers to help small farmers plan for the production of needed crops and to provide on-the-farm training in practical, modern methods of farming.

Small operators also can get help in locating better farms and becoming established as owners, tenants or laborers. FSA loans for operating expenses are available to relocated farmers. Loans also are made for enlargement of farms too small for full-time employment of family labor.

A program also is being set up in many areas to provide transportation and training for farmers unable to get sufficient productive resources or employment where they are, to enable them to become year-round workers on better farms.

Farmers who need tenants or year-round workers can turn to the Department of Agriculture for assistance in obtaining them.

Through the Government's seasonal farm labor transportation program, communities in need of additional seasonal workers to harvest war crops can obtain them from other areas, and communities with a considerable supply of seasonal workers can make them available elsewhere during periods when they do not have full employment at home.

The records of small farmers already assisted by the Farm Security Administration show the extent to which many of them can contribute to increases necessary for the war goals. These borrowers prior to 1942 had already more than doubled their home food production and, during the 1942 crop year, their increases in some of the major war crops were several times the percentage of increases called for by the Department Commodity goals.

If an additional 500,000 small farmers now underemployed could be provided with the facilities necessary to bring them into full production, these 500,000 families could produce 49.8 percent of the increased milk asked for; 7.5 percent of the chickens; 29.8 percent of the eggs; 8.7 percent of the soybeans; and 6.9 percent of the pork and lard.

Increased production is becoming more and more difficult for large operators. The much greater increases that are possible among the small farmer group with its own labor resources can account for an essential part of the margin between established production and the greater requirements that agriculture is now called on to produce.